

Guide to Major Decisions

A Reference for Choosing an Academic Program

What are the advantages of choosing Monroe Community College's Undeclared Option?

- The opportunity to work with Academic Advisement Specialist who will assist you with course selection and career exploration.
- Allows you time to explore different career options and discuss opportunities with department faculty in programs that interest you.
- Provides career development courses (CDL 110) to help you identify your interests and those values important to your future career.
- Provides you with the opportunity to enroll in a broad selection of coursework designed to gain a better understanding of areas that interest you.
- Gives you the tools and skills to plan your future in a systematic and thoughtful way.

The truth about being Undeclared ...

The following are common assumptions about being Undeclared:

Myths about being Undeclared:

1. People believe you are not serious about your studies
2. You are the only student at MCC who has not decided on a major
3. It will take you longer to obtain your degree
4. You are not eligible for financial aid
5. You are not eligible for a 2+2 program
6. You are an indecisive person
7. You really do not belong in college

Truths about being Undeclared:

1. You are not alone! 20% - 50% of students entering college are undecided about their academic or career goals.
2. Approximately 75% of college students will change their major at least once; others several times before graduation.
3. Statistics show that the likelihood of graduation is HIGHER for students who begin their college education undeclared and later choose a major.
4. While exploring options, undeclared students build transferable skills.
5. Matriculated students enrolled in the Undeclared Option can apply for and are eligible to receive financial aid.
6. Matriculated students enrolled in the Undeclared Option with 34 or fewer credits completed and/or in progress, with the required GPA, may be considered for a 2+2 program.
7. According to research, males and females are equally undecided.
8. The academic aptitudes of undeclared students are no different from those of decided students.



Who am I and where am I going?

- It is important to understand your career goal in order to establish a means for attaining it. A successful career is a primary goal of education. By defining your career goal, you should be able to determine your educational goal, and, as a result, your major. To determine this life goal, it is important to consider your interests, abilities, and values, and to investigate career choices that coincide with what you feel is important among these key areas of your life. To learn more about yourself, ask yourself these questions:

1. **What are your interests?** What are your hobbies? What do you do for fun? Would you rather work by yourself or in a group? What subjects did (or do) you enjoy most in high school? In your ideal career what do you see yourself being or doing? What kinds of activities do not interest you at all? Why? It is very important to consider your interests when choosing a major. Can you imagine studying a particular subject that holds no strong interest to you for two, four, or more years!
2. **What are your abilities?** What are you good at? Do you have good study skills? How would you assess your academic ability?
3. **What are your values?** What is important to you? What principles and philosophies guide your life?
4. **What are your skills?** Can you identify your strengths? Are your skills related in any way?

It is important to understand who you are in order to eventually lead you to possible career directions. The understanding comes from the process of self-assessment. In other words, if you do not know who you are, you probably will not be able to figure out where you want to go!

Who Can Help Me?

Finding out who can help you at Monroe Community College and building relationships with professionals on campus can help you feel more connected and less isolated. Do your best to stay in touch with the following student services that are available to help you with your career decision making!

Counseling and Advising Center

(Brighton Campus 1-231, phone number 292-2030, website www.monroecc.edu/go/counseling)

The Counseling Advising Center offers students a variety of professional services. Stop by for:

Personal Counseling
Career Counseling
Academic Advisement
International Student Services
Veterans Services
Returning Adult Student Services
Complete Withdrawals from MCC

The Counseling and Advising Center (1-231, phone number 292-2298) is open:

Mondays 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Tuesdays 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Wednesdays 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursdays 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Fridays 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.



The Advisement Center is located in the Counseling and Advising Center.

Services of the Advisement Center include:

Academic program planning
Selection of courses
Dropping and adding courses
Program degree audits
Transfer information and planning
Course information
Program change advisement
Referral to campus resources and support services

The Advisement Center (1-231) is open:

Mondays 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Thursdays 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Fridays 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Career Center (Brighton Campus 3-108, phone number 292-2248, website www.monroecc.edu/go/careercenter) – The Career Center offers a variety of programs and services. The professional staff is available to help students with career development, transfer college planning, and job search/employment needs. Stop by for:

Career Counseling
Career Resources and Information
Transfer advisement
2+2 Information
Resume Critique
Part-time and full-time job information
Job Search Strategies

The Career Center (3-108) is open:

Mondays 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Tuesdays 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Wednesdays 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursdays 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Fridays 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Student Services (Damon City Campus 5th Floor, phone number 262-1753, website www.monroecc.edu/depts/dstuserv/index.htm) – The Student Services Center provides students with personal and career counseling, academic advisement, transfer planning and academic support resources. Career Counselors at the Damon City Campus can guide you through the career exploration and decision making process by providing you with individualized career assessments, occupational information, and educational planning resources.

The Advisement Center at the *Damon City Campus* (5-252) can assist you with:

Academic program planning
Selection of courses
Dropping and adding courses
Program degree audits
Transfer information and planning
Course information
Program change advisement
Referral to campus resources and support services
The Advisement Center hours vary. Please call 262-1753 for center hours.

Student Services at the Damon City Campus (5th Floor) is open:

Mondays 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Tuesdays 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Wednesdays 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Thursdays 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Fridays 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

What can I do to explore my options?

It is very important to explore your options by taking a wide variety of courses. Many times you will be able to rule out a possible field of study by taking an introductory course. On the other hand, you may decide that the introductory course was a “good fit” for you and you now have your major! It is important to keep in mind that taking a wide selection of courses may expose you to new thinking or new ideas which may result in a “new” you. These courses expose you to new learning and ways of thinking which help develop your interests and guide you to become anything you want to be.

But remember, choice of major is only one factor in determining your future job prospects and career path. Your grades, elective coursework, and the skills you acquire through your coursework often tell employers more about what you have to offer them than does just your major. Furthermore, other factors such as your personal traits, your goals, your experiences (jobs, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, internships), and your knowledge of and demonstrated interest in a career field play a large part in determining an employer’s response to you.

Finally it is important to note that many of today’s jobs are *created*. This means that the unique personal package which you create through academic coursework and extracurricular experiences, not just a said “major”, are *KEY* to your future jobs!

There are a variety of ways you can explore your career options at Monroe Community College.

Career Counseling

- Career counselors can assist you by helping you to clarify your current educational and career goals. They can help you assess your personality, interests, abilities, and skills. They can also provide you with career information as well as make referrals to other career resources on and off campus. Career counseling is available on a walk-in basis or by appointment. Career counseling is free of charge and is available at the Counseling and Advising Center and the Career Center.

Career Library

- The Career Library, houses invaluable, up-to-date occupational materials that provides students with information about careers, transferring and employment. Students can access the Internet in the Career Library for career, transfer college and job search planning purposes. Career Peer Advisors and our professional staff are available to assist you with locating information. The Career Library is located in the Career Center (3-108) at the Brighton Campus and in the Career and Transfer Center (5th Floor) at the Damon City Campus.

Transfer Guides for Career Planning

- Transfer Guides for Career Planning highlight prerequisite and recommended courses for transferring, criteria for acceptance into a program of study, information about the transfer application process, a listing of colleges and universities offering the degree programs, description of the career field and related occupations. Consult with the Career Center or Student Services at the Damon City Campus for more details.

Career Development Courses

- There are specific credit bearing courses at Monroe Community College that help students navigate the career decision-making process. These courses are offered in the fall and spring semesters. **CDL 110 (2 credits) Career and Life Planning for Undeclared Students** – *This course is only open to students in the Undeclared Option*

This highly interactive course introduces students to the elements of career decision making with emphasis on the process of career and life planning. It is designed for students who are interested in learning more about themselves and their career choices. The career development needs of undeclared students will be emphasized through a multi-phase approach including self-exploration, decision-making strategies, career exploration, career counseling, and career planning. Career forums featuring professionals from various career areas will be included.

- CDL 100 (1 credit) Career Development and Planning**

This course will introduce you to the career decision-making process. Emphasis will be on the process of career and life planning. Topics include: skills assessment, values, interests, goal-setting, and the world of work.

- CDL 101 (2 credits) Career and Life Planning for Returning Adults Students**

This course provides an in-depth examination of the elements in career decision-making with emphasis on the process of career and life planning for the returning adult student. Topics include life renewal, functional learning, skills assessment, values, interests, decision-making, goal-setting, and the world of work.

Computerized Resources

- **FOCUS** is a computer-based system designed to assist students with career and educational planning. The **FOCUS** system enables users to discover and learn about career options related to their personal attributes. Users learn to make realistic decisions about their goals and plans, how to self-manage their careers and the importance of adaptability in these times of change. **FOCUS** is available in the Career Center (3-108).
- **DISCOVER** is a computer-based planning program which can help you learn more about yourself and about careers that may be right for you. The system includes self-assessment inventories based upon your interests, values, abilities, and learning experiences in order to help you identify where you are in the career development process. Based on this self-assessment you can develop a list of potential occupations, explore extensive career information, and identify ways to get a job. In addition, this computerized career guidance system highlights occupations citing job responsibilities, training requirements, employment outlook, salary data, related occupations, and sources for additional information. **DISCOVER** also provides information about 7,000 colleges in order to help identify transfer options. **DISCOVER** is available in the Counseling and Advising Center (1-231) and Student Services at the Damon City Campus.

Career Forums

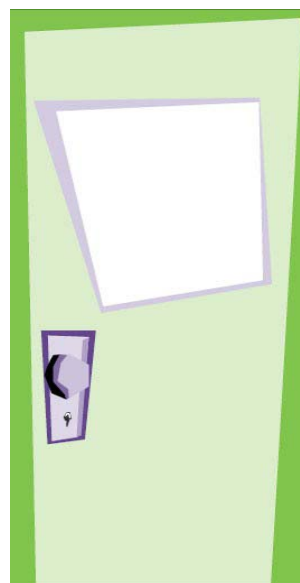
- Each semester four educational career forums take place, which include presentations by professionals in various careers. The purpose is to expose you to a range and variety of career options before making your career choice. Attending the career forums will give you the opportunity to hear professionals speak about and answer questions regarding their experiences in their respective fields.

Websites

- The following websites provide you with a wealth of career planning information and advice from professionals in the field.
- 10 Step Career Planning Guide: <http://10steps.careerpathsonline.com>
- Target Your Interests: www.nycareerzone.org/graphic/assessment
- Work Interest Quiz: www.myfuture.com
- Personality Type: www.typefocus.com
- Occupational Information Network: <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco
- There are several more websites relating to self-assessment, career information, and job search strategies. Visit the Career Center (3-108) for more information.

Workshops

- Each semester a variety of workshops are offered on campus. Professionals in the Counseling and Advising Center, Career Center, and DCC Student Services Center offer several workshops focusing on personal growth, academic support, and career and transfer topics. *In addition, each semester a specialized workshop on Career Decision Making is offered exclusively for Undeclared students.* See the reception desk at the respective center for more information.



Remember, it is NEVER too early to take advantage of the campus resources explained in this guide.

“The future belongs to those who prepare for it.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson